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To whom It may concern:

Regarding SB976

Thank you for taking time to listen to comments on this potentially dangerous bill which I strenuously oppose. My concern as a practicing veterinarian in Wilsonville, OR, who has been involved in both equine and food animal practice for a large part of my career, is what kind of danger a bill like this puts our patients and non-patients in.

In terms of dental procedures: We have known for over 20 years now that proper equine dental procedures require sedation in order to carefully assess the horses mouth and to reach the cheek teeth for both assessment of pathology and for management of this pathology. The old fashioned 'floating' that lay people currently perform, simply does not correct the pathology in almost any horse's mouth. Once we, as veterinarians, started using power tools for dentistry, we all realized what a poor job we had been doing for many years and how we really were doing the horses a disservice by continuing these types of dentals. You cannot use power tools in a horses mouth if they are not properly sedated. Tongue and cheek lacerations and head injuries, as well as injuries to human handlers, occur when horses react to the loud noises the tools provide.

Lay people should not have access to prescription sedatives and they are not trained in the proper use of these medications nor do they have training to deal with the possible risks and side effects/complications that can occur with their use. If they do have access to them, they have to had illegally procured them and they are not trained in their safe use. Furthermore, lay people have not been properly trained in equine dental procedures so cannot properly assess the mouth or treat the conditions present without veterinary training.

In terms of pregnancy exams in food animals: Safe rectal procedures and the consequences of unsafe rectal exams includes rectal tears, abortion, and administration of medications by farmers to potentially incorrectly diagnosed animals resulting in return to cyclicity thereby terminating a pregnancy that was not recognized and thereby costing the farmer lost income due to delay in calving/lambing/kidding, etc. Rectal tears, when unrecognized, can result in peritonitis and death. Rectal exams on miniature cattle and small ruminants have a much higher risk of rectal tears without proper training and AI courses simply do not provide training on these types of animals. Pregnancy exams in sheep and goats may involve the use of devices placed in the rectum with a probe attached and again present a much higher risk of injury if the technician is improperly trained and courses that include pregnancy exam of cattle, only skim information on our smaller production animals. Understanding and having access to proper restraint techniques may also not be provided in a short AI course.

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Thus the risks of having non-veterinarians perform these types of procedures on equine and food animal patients greatly increases the risk of both harm and death for these animals. Better for an animal to have no dental then for the owner to believe the animal has had a proper dental thereby denying the patient from a proper dental in a reasonable time frame or having a dead animal because the incorrect sedative was administered. And better to not know if an animal is pregnant then to have a dead animal.

I strongly oppose this bill, and for the welfare of all animals in Oregon, I hope you will not support it. Thank you again for taking the time to consider all factors that are involved having this bill become a law, and the dangers in which doing so, will put our animals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in brown ink, appearing to read 'Cheryl Lopate', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Cheryl Lopate, MS, DVM, DACT
Board Certified in Reproduction

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